

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this Patent Application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks. No additional fee is required for this Amendment as the number of independent claims has decreased, and the total number of claims has decreased.

Amendment to the Claims

Applicants have amended Claim 1 to include limitations of dependent Claim 12, which the Office Action indicates contains allowable subject matter, and intervening Claims 7, 8, and 10. Claims 6-8 and 10-14 have been canceled in view of amended Claim 1. Claim 9 has been amended to correct the claim dependency, in view of canceled Claim 8.

Applicants have amended Claims 4 and 22 to change “deformable material” to “rubber material.” Support for this Amendment can be found at page 13, last paragraph.

Claims 16-20 have been canceled, without prejudice.

Claims 24 and 25 have been amended to directly depend from allowed Claim 21.

No new matter has been added to the claims by this Amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

The rejection of Claims 4, 5, 17, 18, and 22-25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, is respectfully traversed. Applicants have replaced the term “deformable material” with the term “rubber material” in Claims 4 and 22. Claims 17 and 18 are canceled. Applicants believe that the above Amendment overcomes this rejection.

Claim Rejections

The rejection of Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Neunzert et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0113420, is rendered moot by the above Amendment. Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of dependent Claim 12. Independent Claim 16 has been canceled.

The rejection of Claims 2 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Neunzert et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0113420, in view of Larsen et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0155757, is rendered moot by the above Amendment. Claims 2 and 15 depend from amended Claim 1, which now includes the allowable subject matter of dependent Claim 12.

The rejection of Claims 5 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Neunzert et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0113420,

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is rendered moot by the above Amendment. Claim 5 depends from amended Claim 1, which includes the allowable subject matter of dependent Claim 12. Claim 18 has been canceled.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for his efforts in identifying allowable subject matter. Claim 21 is allowed, and dependent Claims 22-25 are believed to now be in condition for allowance, in view of the above Amendment. Amended Claim 1 includes limitations from allowable dependent Claim 12 and the intervening claims.

As all pending Claims depend from amended Claim 1 or allowed Claim 21, Applicants believe this Patent Application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is asked to contact the undersigned by telephone if any issue remains.

Conclusion

Applicants intend to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicants have not addressed or resolved in this response, Applicants' undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

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Applicants sincerely believe that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully request early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Swanson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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